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SUNDAY.....DECEMBER 15, 1889.

The Chief Justice's Address—Again.

Surely there can be nobody who does not desire to know the opinions of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, or, as Mr. CRANZ always phrased it, "the Chief Justice of the United States," upon the living questions of the day. To us in the South some of these are burning questions. When the halls of Congress resound with denunciations of the southern people, and the CHANDLERS and SCHAFFERS threaten to overthrow the rights of the States and govern one third of the country from Washington, and when our State election laws are the possibility about to be repealed, not by the Legislature of Virginia, but by the Congress of the United States, it is time for everybody to look to the Supreme Court. So also when a sovereign State is cited to appear before that august tribunal, and cited in violation of the eleventh article of amendments to the Federal Constitution, the people of that State—let us say at once, the people of Virginia—cannot but feel a deep interest in all the utterances of the presiding officer of that tribunal touching the relative powers of the Federal and State governments. What is the significance of that amendment in the judgment of that highest judicial officer in the world?

The extracts which we gave yesterday from the Chief Justice's oration of Wednesday last furnish indubitable evidence that he has thoroughly studied all the questions involved in the dual form of government which our fathers bequeathed to us, and has reached well-founded conclusions. If these conclusions are sound enough, so much the more highly must we respect the intellect of a man who, though his environment has all his life been such that it was natural for him to fall in with the centralizing teachings of the Federalists, has nevertheless seen his way clearly to the adoption of the doctrines of Mr. JEFFERSON.

We shall give a few more extracts from the Chief Justice's oration:

"Doubtless in many instances the Constitution has been subjected to straits which have tested its elasticity without breaking its texture, but the whole system of party has been forced to keep the balance."

The alternative course has been deprecated and a law-abiding and law-abiding people has welcomed the rebound which restored the rigid outline and even tenor of its way.

"In the maintenance of the com-

munity that the largest liberty consistent with the greatest progress has been found, and this is as true between the States and the Federal Government as between the individual and the state."

"The chief play of the two forces is a natural one—the gravitation is to the center with human nature as it is."

The Chief Justice will not admit that "the texture" of the Constitution has been broken. He says that the true doctrine as between the Federal Government and the State governments is the "largest liberty consistent with the greatest progress."

Yet he owns or rather affirms that "gravitation is to the center." True as preaching. And it is time that the tendency were stopped and the States restored to the condition in which the framers of the Constitution left them—of course, with the exception that no State now has the right to secede from the Union.

What General WASHINGTON wished, says the orator, was "solidarity without centralization in destruction of local regulation."

The father of his country realized "the vital importance of the preservation of local self-government through the States." Admirably stated. And if this was WASHINGTON's wish, he being a Hamiltonian Federalist, what might not be said as to the wishes of JEFFERSON and HENRY?

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